

Service Area Plan

Department of Veterans' Services

State Veterans Cemetery Management and Operations (50206)

Service Area Background Information

Service Area Description

Virginia's two state-operated veterans cemeteries provide honorable burial and memorial services to Virginia's veterans and eligible dependents. The Virginia Veterans Cemetery is located in Amelia and the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk.

Service Area Alignment to Mission

This service area directly aligns with the department's mission of ensuring that Virginia's veterans and their beneficiaries receive the perpetual care they have earned through service and sacrifice.

Service Area Statutory Authority

Title 2.2, Chapter 20 provides for the establishment of a Department of Veterans Services and the appointment of a Commissioner of Veterans Services. It outlines the administrative responsibilities of the department, which include the establishment, operation, administration, and maintenance of cemeteries for veterans owned and operated by the Commonwealth.

Service Area Customer Base

Customer(s)	Served	Potential
Veterans, Eligible Spouses and Dependents	443	2,237

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Anticipated Changes In Service Area Customer Base

Explanation of current Service Area Customer Base

Note: The veteran population data used in this section is taken from VetPop2001Adj, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (USDVA's) official estimate and projection of the veteran population as of 9-30-02.

VetPop2001Adj "provides a projection of the veteran population at the state level to 2030 by age, sex and period of service." (Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, <http://www.va.gov/vetdata/demographics/index.htm>).

To be eligible for interment/inurnment in one of Virginia's two state-operated veterans cemeteries, a veteran must meet certain requirements, the most important of which concern type of discharge and residency. A veteran must have retired or have been discharged under other than dishonorable or undesirable conditions, and the veteran must be a Virginia resident at time of death, or must have entered military service from Virginia. Spouses of eligible veterans, as well as some dependents, are authorized placement in the same plot as the eligible veteran.

The vast majority of Virginia's veterans meet these eligibility requirements. Thus, the potential customer base for the Cemetery Services sections is theoretically the number of veterans who pass away each year, plus the spouses and eligible dependents of these veterans. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2005 – October 2004 through September 2005 – VetPop2001Adj forecast that 16,066 Virginia veterans would pass away, meaning that the Cemetery Services section's potential customer base for FFY 2005 would be 16,066 veterans and an indeterminate number of spouses and dependents. However, a variety of factors serve to negate using the total number of veterans (plus spouses and dependents) who pass away each year as the potential customer base for Virginia's veterans cemeteries.

The first factor to reduce the number of potential customers for Virginia's veterans cemeteries is distance. Experience has led the department to conclude that the vast majority of veterans choose to be buried in relatively close proximity to their final residence. Alternatively, the surviving spouse or family members may choose to bury the departed veteran in close proximity to surviving family members, facilitating visitation to the deceased's final resting place. For example, it's unlikely that a veteran who spent his/her final years in Winchester will choose to be buried in the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk, over 200 miles away, especially if that veterans spouse and children still reside in the Winchester area. The department's belief in this area is supported by the policies of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), part of the USDVA.

A goal of the NCA is that there be a national or state-operated veterans cemetery within a 75-mile drive of a majority of as many of America's veterans as feasible. The NCA feels that few veterans, or the surviving family members of those veterans, will choose a final resting place more than 75 miles from their home. When selecting the site for a new national cemetery or granting the funds for the construction of a new state veterans cemetery, the NCA uses the number of veterans living within a 75-mile radius of the potential site as a determining factor. The majority of veterans buried at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia previously resided within a 75-mile radius of the cemetery, with most having lived within 50 miles.

The second factor to reduce the number of potential customers for Virginia's veterans cemeteries is that not all veterans eligible for burial in a veterans cemetery will choose to be buried in a veterans cemetery, even if they live within a 75-mile drive of a veterans cemetery. For example, many World War II and Korean veterans have already completed their pre-planning needs with local private cemeteries, and thus will not choose to be buried in a veterans cemetery.

When selecting the site for a new national cemetery or granting the funds for the construction of a new state

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veterans cemetery, the NCA examines the annual death rate of veterans residing within 75 miles of the cemetery. Based on historical data, the NCA then estimates the percentage of veterans who will choose to be buried in the new veterans cemetery, instead of in a civilian cemetery or other final resting place. This percentage is known as a "usage factor," and is usually around 20%. In addition to helping identify the potential customer base for a veterans cemetery, the usage factor is useful in planning cemetery staffing and budget requirements.

As discussed earlier, 16,066 Virginia veterans were forecast to pass away in FFY2005. Assigning a usage factor of 20% to this number would mean that 3,213 would choose to be buried in a veterans cemetery. The USDVA also factors in the number of spouses and dependents who would choose to be buried in a veterans cemetery, and assigns a dependent usage factor equal to half of the veteran usage factor. For FFY05, this would translate to 1,607 spouses and dependents. Altogether, 4,820 veterans and spouses might choose to be buried in a veterans cemetery in FFY05, provided one was available in a 75-mile radius of their home.

The third factor to reduce the number of potential customers for Virginia's veterans cemeteries is that Virginia's veterans cemeteries face "competition" for burials, not just from civilian cemeteries, but also from national veterans cemeteries. Virginia's veterans living in the "cachement area" of a national cemetery – i.e., within 75 miles of a national cemetery – may choose to be buried in a national veterans cemetery instead of a state veterans cemetery.

There are 15 national cemeteries operated by the USDVA and one cemetery, Arlington National, operated by the U.S. Army. Culpeper National Cemetery and Quantico National Cemetery accept new interments of both casketed and cremated remains, while three USDVA-operated cemeteries only accept the new interment of cremated remains or the burial of a family member in an existing grave. The remaining 10 USDVA-operated cemeteries only accept the burial of a family member in an existing grave. In addition to the national cemeteries in Virginia, Mountain Home National Cemetery, in northeast Tennessee, serves veterans residing in the southwestern part of the Commonwealth. Finally, Arlington National Cemetery accepts the burial of both casketed and cremated remains, but has stricter burial eligibility requirements than do the USDVA-operated national cemeteries.

One other factor serves to reduce the number of potential customers for Virginia's veterans cemeteries – the fact that some of Virginia's veterans do not live within a 75-mile drive of either a state or a national veterans cemetery. These veterans are more likely to opt for burial in a civilian cemetery.

Instead of one potential customer base – the number of eligible veterans and dependents who pass away each year in the Commonwealth – four potential customer bases could be considered:

- The total potential customer base (i.e. all eligible Virginia veterans and dependents who pass away in a particular year)
- The potential customer base of those veterans and dependents living within a 75-mile radius of Virginia's two state-operated veterans cemeteries
- The potential customer base of those veterans and dependents living within a 75-mile radius of a national veterans cemetery
- The potential customer base of those veterans and dependents who do not live within a 75-mile drive of either a state or a national veterans cemetery

While an understanding of each potential customer base is important, the Department of Veterans Services has the greatest potential:

- To impact those veterans and dependents who live within the cachement area of one of the two state-operated veterans cemeteries through current operations and aggressive marketing efforts, and;
- To impact those veterans and dependents who do not live within a 75-mile drive of either a state or a

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national veterans cemetery, by advocating for the construction and subsequent operation of new state-operated veterans cemeteries

Approximately 350,000 Virginia veterans live within a 75-mile drive of either the Virginia Veterans Cemetery or the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery, representing about 47% of Virginia's 750,000 veterans. VetPop2001Adj forecast that just under 16,000 of Virginia's veterans would pass away in Virginia FY05 (July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005). If the death rate was assumed to be uniform across Virginia, then 7,500 of the 16,000 Virginia veterans (47%) forecast to pass away in FY05 had a final residence within the cachement area of one of Virginia's two state-operated veterans cemeteries. If a 20% veterans usage factor and a 10% dependent usage factor is assumed, then Virginia's two state-operated veterans cemeteries had the potential to serve approximately 2,200 veterans and eligible dependents in FY05.

Actual burial numbers were 188 at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery and 255 at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in FY05. The combined total of 443 burials at the two cemeteries represents only 20% of the approximately 2,200 potential customers. It must be noted, however, that the Horton Cemetery did not perform its first burial service until December 13, 2004, meaning that the cemetery was open for just over half of FY05.

Approximately 104,000 Virginia veterans, or just under 14%, did not live within a 75-mile drive of a state or national veterans cemetery in FY05.

The USDVA forecasts that the number of Virginia veterans who pass away each year is forecast to increase through FFY2015, reaching a peak of 17,799 a year before declining to 16,374 by FFY2030. If this prediction holds true, the Customer Base for Virginia's veterans cemeteries should meet or exceed current base levels for the next 25 years.

If a third state-operated veterans cemetery were constructed in Southwest Virginia, in the Dublin area, for example, it would have the potential to serve approximately 65,000 of the 104,000 Virginia veterans who do not currently live within 75 miles of a state or national veterans cemetery

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Service Area Products and Services

- Virginia's veterans cemeteries offer the following services at no charge to eligible veterans and for a fee, currently \$300, to eligible spouses or dependents:
 - Interment in a ground plot of casketed remains, or the columbarium or ground inurnment for cremated remains
 - The opening and closing of a gravesite
 - Through the USDVA, a grave marker, with inscription
 - Placement of the grave marker
 - Perpetual care of the gravesite
- Casketed gravesites are identified with authorized markers based on the types available at each cemetery (marble at the cemetery in Amelia, granite at the cemetery in Suffolk)
- Cremated remains are buried or inurned at the cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains. Ground inurnments are marked with flat gray granite markers at both cemeteries, while above ground (columbarium) inurnments are marked by an inscribed niche cover (marble at the cemetery in Amelia, granite at the cemetery in Suffolk)
- Spouses and eligible dependents may be buried in the same grave as the veteran, with other burial benefits (opening and closing of the gravesite, perpetual care, etc.) being the same as for the veteran. Virginia's veterans cemeteries charge a fee for the burial of a spouse or dependent, equal to the reimbursement amount received for eligible veterans. As of July 1, 2005, this was \$300.
- Each veteran and family member must provide his or her own concrete vault or liner. Vault arrangements are made with a funeral director at the time funeral services are being arranged.
- Upon being contacted concerning the death, cemetery representatives coordinate the collection of all appropriate paperwork. All forms are assembled, verified, and entered in the Burial Operation Support System (BOSS) computer program for space assignment and in preparation for ordering of the requested grave marker.
- Cemetery representatives schedule the funeral service time and date with the applicable funeral home and family representative. Family members may visit the cemetery prior to the burial if they wish.
- On the day of the scheduled service, cemetery representatives meet the funeral procession as it enters the cemetery gates. Cemetery representatives guide the funeral party through the funeral service, a very emotional period that often lasts an hour or more.
- Grounds personnel work diligently to ensure the cemetery is maintained to the highest standards. Grave/cremation sites are laid out, verified, opened, and closed daily. Grass, trees, and mulch beds are continually maintained to ensure that the best possible landscape appearance is presented.

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Factors Impacting Service Area Products and Services

The interment is the most important function carried out in the cemetery. The period of time between the arrival of a funeral procession at the cemetery gate until the time the last member of a funeral party has left the cemetery is viewed by cemetery employees as the most important time of the day. It is the time when cemetery employees must display the highest degree of compassion and concern, especially while in the presence of the family and friends. It is during this time that the physical and emotional strain of family members and friends is at its highest peak. To this end, it is imperative that cemetery employees do all that they can to ensure that each interment is conducted with maximum efficiency, without sacrificing any of the dignity and reverence that must be accorded during these services. A dignified and reverent service helps begin the healing process, and often forms a lasting impression in the minds of the deceased's friends and family.

Factors that impact the ability of cemetery employees to provide the highest degree of products and services are:

Positive Impacts

- **Staffing**
 - Cemetery employees generally fill one of three roles, supplemented by inmate labor:
 - **Administrative:** these employees manage cemetery operations, to include making funeral arrangements, greeting arriving funeral parties, etc. Administrative employees include the Cemetery Superintendent, responsible for all facets of cemetery operations
 - **Grounds maintenance:** these employees handle the physical activities associated with opening and closing gravesites and maintain the grounds and physical plant of the cemetery
 - **Vehicle and equipment mechanic:** handled by groundskeepers at smaller cemeteries, a dedicated vehicle and equipment mechanic is needed when the number of burials per year exceeds 300
 - In addition, inmates from local correctional facilities supplement cemetery groundskeepers. Though not without problems (discussed below), inmate labor provides a low-cost labor source for basic grounds maintenance
 - Maintenance of adequate staffing levels directly impacts customer service and the overall appearance to the cemetery. Staffing levels are determined by numerous factors, the most important of which is the number of interments conducted per year
 - Listed below are the staffing levels the department believes necessary to operate each of Virginia's veterans cemeteries, based on the number of burials per year. The staffing levels were derived from a combination of sources, including experience at Virginia's two state-operated veterans cemeteries, staffing levels at national cemeteries, and staffing levels at civilian cemeteries with workloads similar to Virginia's veterans cemeteries:
 - 0 – 100 burials per year: 1.5 administrative employees, 2 groundskeepers, and 4 inmate laborers
 - 101 – 200 burials per year: 1.5 administrative employees, 2.5 groundskeepers, and 4 inmate laborers
 - 201 – 300 burials per year: 2 administrative employees, 3.5 groundskeepers, and 4 inmate laborers
 - 301 – 400 burials per year: 2 administrative employees, 4 groundskeepers, 1 mechanic, and 4 inmate laborers
 - 401 – 500 burials per year: 2.5 administrative employees, 5 groundskeepers, 1 mechanic, and 4 inmate laborers
 - 501 – 600 burials per year: 3 administrative employees, 5.5 groundskeepers, 1 mechanic, and 4 inmate laborers

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• NOTE: Not included in the numbers above is the Cemetery Administrator, who provides leadership and management to both cemeteries

• NOTE: A full-time employee is one who works 40 or more hours per week. A part-time employee (identified by a ".5" above) is one who works 22 to 28 hours per week

• NOTE: While some manual labor is performed by inmates (sometimes referred to as detainees) of state correctional facilities, use of inmate labor is not without problems. Although a valuable part of the team, inmate labor can be somewhat unpredictable and unreliable from day to day, as the working members of the inmate labor team can change without notice. Cemetery personnel must expend considerable time explaining the tasks to be performed on any given day, instructing inmate laborers in the operation of cemetery equipment, etc. Despite these challenges, the inmate workforce has provided Virginia's veterans cemeteries with the means to complete grounds maintenance tasks in a timely manner

- Budgeting – an adequate budget allows for the:
 - Management of a phased replacement program for grounds maintenance equipment. Old and worn out equipment would be replaced in a timely fashion
 - Management of a phased replacement program for building furnishings and office equipment
 - Procurement of new and up to date maintenance equipment, building furnishings and office equipment
 - Proper maintenance of cemetery grounds through over seeding, fertilization, and weed control on a bi-annual basis
 - Provision of periodic pay raises for cemetery employees, helping the cemeteries to attract and retain an able workforce
 - Creation of an advertising campaign in order to reach a greater number of veterans. Such efforts would help to offset the efforts of private cemeteries to sell gravesite spaces to veterans who are unaware of their right to a free burial in a veterans cemetery. These veterans are generally aged 25 to 50 and do not belong to a veterans groups, which might have provided them with information about burial in a veterans cemetery
- Other resources
 - Volunteer assistance: Local veterans, citizens, and veterans service organizations give selflessly of their time to assist in many facets of cemetery operations, from manning information displays to comforting families in their time of grief to organizing ceremonies on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Veterans groups and individuals have also donated such items as benches, improving the overall appearance of the cemeteries
 - Local funeral homes: Cemetery personnel work with local funeral directors to help ensure that veterans and their families receive the information needed to contact either of Virginia's veterans cemetery in their time of need
 - Local veterans and local chapters of veterans service organizations: These individuals and groups put out a very large amount of information about cemetery benefits
 - Local newspapers: One of the best sources for getting cemetery information out to the public is through local newspapers. Between December 2004 and May 2005, local papers published five articles about the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery

Negative Impacts

- Adverse Weather Conditions have the potential to severely impact cemetery operations by:
 - Impacting the ability of cemetery staff to safely reach the cemetery
 - Impacting the ability of funeral parties to safely reach the cemetery
 - Bringing the possibility of a loss of power or telephone service

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- Making it difficult to conduct scheduled funeral services due to winter ice and snow. Such conditions also raise the risk of injuries caused by slips and falls, with the attendant risk of liability lawsuits
- Burial and ground maintenance operations at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery are dependent on the use of inmate labor. Although the use of such labor has saved the state some money by delaying the need to hire additional full-time grounds staff, the use of inmate labor presents cemetery managers with many problems, including:
 - A limited work day: Inmates work a maximum of five hours per day at the cemetery. Though an inmate work day may be nine hours long, travel to and from the cemetery consumes at least three hours, and inmates receive an hour break for lunch, leaving five hours or less to perform grounds maintenance operations and to assist cemetery staff in preparing for funeral services. The shortened work day thus limits the number of funeral services that may be performed per day and impacts the appearance of the cemetery
 - Adverse weather conditions (snow and heavy rain): On occasion, adverse weather has caused the detainees to arrive at the cemetery late, or not to arrive at all, due to poor road conditions. If this happens, a funeral service may have to be delayed or canceled, a situation that embarrasses cemetery employees and almost certainly adds to the grief of the funeral party
 - Short work (rotation) cycle: On average, detainee work crews are on site only two to three months before they are replaced by a new work crew. This short work cycle means that cemetery employees must continuously train new detainees in cemetery operations, and must continuously monitor detainee performance. With such a short work cycle, detainees rarely develop the skill level needed to work without the supervision of cemetery personnel. This means that the cemetery's appearance is never quite as "sharp" as would be possible with more full-time groundskeepers

Pre-planning

- Pre-planning for burial involves the purchase of a cemetery burial plot in advance of one's death (or in advance of the death of a family member). Privately owned/operated cemeteries have for years employed a sales and telemarketing staff simply to pre-sell cemetery burial plots
- This practice continues, though it has slowed considerably over the last year because of the rules governing telemarketing
- Many World War II and Korean War-era veterans residing in the cemetery service areas have already completed their pre-planned funeral arrangements with privately owned/operated cemeteries
- To better attract customers in future years, Virginia's veterans cemeteries must focus marketing efforts not only on older veterans, but on younger veterans as well, in order to make these veterans aware of the benefits offered by Virginia's veterans cemeteries before they opt to pre-purchase a plot in a privately owned/operated cemetery

Location versus Population

- Choosing a site on which to build a new veterans cemetery is dependent on many factors, including the identification of a suitable and affordable site, the current state budget climate, and the number of eligible veterans residing within 75 miles of the proposed location. All but a small portion of a veterans cemetery's operating budget comes from the state or federal government, and decision makers are understandably reluctant to build a veterans cemetery in areas with very a very small veterans population
- Virginia's veterans cemeteries are well sited to serve the concentrations of veterans in central and southeast Virginia. Many military members choose to retire near military bases in order to take advantage of health care, commissary, and base exchange facilities. The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery, in

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Suffolk, is in close proximity to the Navy, Air Force, and Army bases in the Tidewater region and thus has a large veteran and retire population on which to draw

- The lack of a state or national veterans cemetery within a 75-mile drive of veterans in Southwest Virginia impacts the ability of the department to veterans living in this part of the Commonwealth

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Anticipated Changes To Service Area Products and Services

- Funds have been requested through the capital budget process for the construction of a second committal shelter at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in FY09. A second committal shelter would allow concurrent memorial services to be conducted. In conjunction with the hiring of additional groundskeepers, a mechanic, a part-time administrative assistant, and a cemetery superintendent, a second committal shelter would greatly expand the service capabilities of the Horton cemetery
- Funds have been requested through the capital budget process for the construction of a third state-operated veterans cemetery in Southwest Virginia in FY09. If constructed in the Dublin area, this cemetery would have the capability of serving a veteran population of approximately 65,000
- The department will hire an additional full-time groundskeeper in FY06 for the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery. This will allow the cemetery to better serve Virginia's veterans by providing a greater "window of opportunity" in which burials may be scheduled. This means that the cemetery will be able to start burials earlier each morning and close burial sites later each day
- Because the department believes that the number of burials conducted each year at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery will continue to grow as a result of increased advertising and a rising veteran death rate, the department will request the funds and position authorization to hire additional groundskeepers and a mechanic in FY07
- The department will request the funds and position authorization to hire a full-time cemetery superintendent and a part-time administrative assistant at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in FY07. The department will also request the funds and position authorization to convert the part-time administrative assistant position at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery to full-time status in FY07. The new positions are needed to manage the increasing burial rate at both cemeteries, to coordinate funeral operations, to assist veterans who visit the cemetery seeking information, and to complete the myriad of administrative tasks that come from managing a growing operation. As with the hiring of additional grounds staff and the construction of a second committal shelter at the Horton cemetery, a cemetery superintendent and additional administrative staff will improve the capacity of the cemeteries to serve Virginia's veterans
- The department will redouble its efforts to inform Virginia's veterans of the burial benefits offered by the cemeteries. Marketing efforts will include, but are not limited to:
 - Increased contact with the directors of local funeral home
 - Regular visits to the local chapters of veterans service organizations to distribute cemetery brochures and pre-applications
 - Contact with churches and other places of worship in order to reach the significant percentage of veterans who are members of a church congregation
 - Distribution of cemetery brochures to local barbershops and beauty parlors. Experience in other states and inquiries from local barbershops and beauty salons would seem to indicate that this is a good channel in which to reach veterans
 - Participation in Supermarket of Veterans Benefits and similar events, in order to get the word out to veterans who may have not otherwise have been aware of their burial/cemetery benefits
 - Advertising in local newspapers. The department will request funds to purchase advertising space in the obituary section of local newspapers

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Service Area Financial Summary

	<u>Fiscal Year 2007</u>		<u>Fiscal Year 2008</u>	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Base Budget	\$284,386	\$157,116	\$284,386	\$157,116
Changes To Base	\$15,847	\$8,755	\$15,847	\$8,755
SERVICE AREA TOTAL	\$300,233	\$165,871	\$300,233	\$165,871

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Service Area Objectives, Measures, and Strategies

Objective 50206.01

To increase the burial/interment rate at Virginia's veterans cemeteries.

Virginia's state-operated veterans cemeteries exist to serve the burial, memorial, and perpetual care needs of Virginia's veterans. In order to serve a greater number of veterans, the department must step up efforts to advertise cemetery services. At present, the department relies on three primary means of reaching eligible veterans – presentations to local veterans groups; articles in local newspapers about the cemeteries, most published around Memorial Day or Veterans Day; and word of mouth. To increase the number of burials, the department will initiate new marketing efforts designed to promote the awareness of the cemeteries among veterans and their families. The department believes that these awareness efforts will help boost the burial/interment rate.

This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Strengthen outreach and marketing efforts
- Improve access to veterans services
- Maximize flow of federal dollars to meet the needs of Virginia's veterans
- Make Virginia an even more attractive place for military retirees by delivering top-quality veterans services

This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 50206.01.01**

Percentage of Veterans Service Organization (VSO) posts/chapters visited annually.

Measure Type: Output **Measure Frequency:** Annually

Measure Baseline: This is a new measure – data gathered after the program is instituted in FY07 will serve as the baseline

Measure Target: Visit 100% of VSO posts/chapters in a 50-mile radius of the cemeteries at least once per year

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected from the weekly reports prepared by each cemetery

- **Measure 50206.01.02**

Percentage of funeral homes visited annually.

Measure Type: Output **Measure Frequency:** Annually

Measure Baseline: This is a new measure – data gathered after the program is instituted in FY07 will serve as the baseline

Measure Target: Visit 100% of funeral homes in a 50-mile radius of the cemeteries at least once per year

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected from the weekly reports prepared by each cemetery

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- **Measure 50206.01.03**

Percentage of nursing homes, adult care centers, and adult living communities visited semi-annually.

Measure Type: Output

Measure Frequency: Every Six Months

Measure Baseline: This is a new measure – data gathered after the program is instituted in FY07 will serve as the baseline

Measure Target: Visit 100% of nursing homes, adult care centers, and adult living communities in a 50-mile radius of the cemeteries semi-annually

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected from the weekly reports prepared by each cemetery

- **Measure 50206.01.04**

Number of outreach activities/events participated in per year.

Measure Type: Output

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: This is a new measure – data gathered after the program is instituted in FY07 will serve as the baseline

Measure Target: Participate in at least 10 outreach activities/events per year

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected from the weekly reports prepared by each cemetery

- **Measure 50206.01.05**

Percentage increase in the number of burials at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery.

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: Number of burials in FY05

Measure Target: Increase the number of burials by 10% per year through FY10

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected from the monthly interment reports prepared by each cemetery

- **Measure 50206.01.06**

Percentage increase in the number of burials at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery.

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: Number of burials in FY05

Measure Target: Increase the number of burials by 20% per year through FY10

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected from the monthly interment reports prepared by each cemetery

Objective 50206.01 Has the Following Strategies:

- DVS will launch new marketing initiatives to inform veterans and dependents of the burial benefits offered by Virginia's veterans cemeteries. These initiatives will include annual or semi-annual visits to nursing homes, funeral homes, and posts/chapters of Veterans Service Organizations; distribution of literature to churches, barber and beauty shops; and participation in events likely to draw veterans and their families
- DVS will request funds to support the new marketing initiative, including the purchase of advertising space in the obituary sections of newspapers in the cemetery customer service areas

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- Cemetery staff will “piggyback” off the marketing efforts of the Benefit Services and Care Center Services sections to help inform veterans and dependents about cemetery burial benefits
- DVS will continue to advocate for the funds, already requested through the capital budget process, for the construction of a second committal shelter at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery. Construction of a second committal shelter will allow two burial services to be conducted simultaneously, doubling potential service capacity

Objective 50206.02

To offer the sale and placement of burial vaults.

Virginia’s veterans cemeteries offer burial and perpetual care services at no charge to eligible veterans and for a fee, currently \$300, to eligible spouses or dependents. The funeral process is not without cost to the veteran or his/her family, however. Veterans or their family members must pay to have the deceased’s remains prepared for burial by a funeral home and must purchase a casket and burial vault. Burial vaults are purchased through a funeral home or vault company, at a cost of \$800 to \$1,000, which includes the cost of placing the vault in the gravesite at one of the veterans cemetery prior to the burial service.

The department believes that an opportunity exists to serve Virginia’s veterans by offering the sale and placement of burial vaults at a significantly reduced cost – perhaps in the \$400 to \$500 range. Veterans would not be required to purchase a burial vault from one of the veterans cemeteries, but rather would retain the option to purchase a burial vault from a funeral home or vault company.

Neither cemetery would require new equipment to support the placement of burial vaults. The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery has a vault-lowering device that can accommodate the placement of concrete vaults sold under the Monarch label, while the Virginia Veterans Cemetery has equipment that can accommodate the placement of resin burial vaults sold under the Vantage label. If the vault sale and placement program is successful at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, additional equipment, including a full-size backhoe and vault-lowering device, could be purchased to support the sale and placement of concrete vaults.

This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Improve access to veterans services
- Make Virginia an even more attractive place for military retirees by delivering top-quality veterans services

This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 50206.02.01**

Percentage of burials made using a burials vault purchased from a Virginia veterans cemetery.

Measure Type: Outcome **Measure Frequency:** Annually

Measure Baseline: This is a new measure – data gathered after the program is instituted in FY07 will serve as the baseline

Measure Target: Be the provider of burial vaults for at least 25% of the burials conducted at Virginia’s veterans cemeteries

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected from the weekly reports prepared by each cemetery

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Objective 50206.02 Has the Following Strategies:

- Cemetery personnel will identify vault suppliers and enter into a purchasing contract
- Marketing efforts will be launched to promote the new service
- If warranted, cemetery personnel will request funding for a full-size backhoe and vault-lowering device for the Virginia Veterans Cemetery

Objective 50206.03

To initiate a cemetery beautification program.

A cemetery's appearance plays a large role in attracting customers. In addition to the lush expanse of green grass surrounding the gravesites, having a wide variety of flowering plants, trees, and bushes contributes markedly to a cemetery's appearance as a place of dignified and quiet beauty, befitting those who have served our country in war and in peace.

The department wishes to initiate a cemetery beautification program. The goal is to choose plants, trees, and bushes that flower at different times of the year, so that there is "color" in each cemetery for as much of the year as possible, contributing to the overall beauty of the cemeteries. Examples of types of plant, trees, and bushes that could be planted include Ginko trees, Azalea bushes, Hawthorn bushes, and Crepe Myrtle trees in red, white, and purple.

This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Improve access to veterans services
- Maximize flow of federal dollars to meet the needs of Virginia's veterans
- Make Virginia an even more attractive place for military retirees by delivering top-quality veterans services

This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

• Measure 50206.03.01

Number of flowering plants, trees, and bushes planted each year.

Measure Type: Output

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: This is a new measure – data gathered after the program is instituted in FY07 will serve as the baseline

Measure Target: Plant a minimum of 12 flowering plants, trees, and bushes at each cemetery each year from FY07 through FY11

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected from the weekly reports prepared by each cemetery

Objective 50206.03 Has the Following Strategies:

- Cemetery personnel will identify an appropriate mix of flowering plants, bushes, and trees for each cemetery, taking into account cost, ease of maintenance, expected lifespan, and the time of year that each is in bloom
- The department will request funding appropriate to supporting the beautification program
- Cemetery personnel will identify and prepare new plant, bush, and tree beds throughout the grounds of each cemetery

Service Area Plan

Department of Veterans' Services

State Veterans Cemetery Management and Operations (50206)

- Cemetery personnel will purchase and plant the new bushes, trees, and plants at the appropriate time each year